

Ronald McDonald House Charities®

THIRTY YEARS OF HELPING
KIDS TO SMILE AGAIN

Keeping Our Promise

Who would have guessed that a red-haired, big-shoed character could make such a global impact on the health of children?

Everyone recognizes Ronald McDonald® as the happy face behind a restaurant chain beloved by generations of kids. But for the past three decades, his familiar grin has also served as a beacon of comfort, help and hope for seriously ill children and their families around the world.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the first Ronald McDonald House®, the cornerstone of Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC®), a dedicated network of people and programs that has burgeoned into an international phenomenon. What began with one sick little girl in Philadelphia is today a sophisticated organization that reaches millions of families and operates in 47 countries.

Yet despite the complexities involved in this enormous worldwide effort, the promise RMHC has made for children in need remains simple: we give them a reason to smile again.

The Roots of RMHC

The idea of a “home-away-from-home” for families of hospitalized children began with an unlikely partnership. In 1974, Philadelphia Eagles tight end Fred Hill and his wife spent many weeks camped out on waiting room chairs while their 3-year-old daughter Kim was being treated for leukemia. Seeing all the other families around them in the same situation, Hill rallied the support of teammates, doctors and the McDonald’s® restaurant chain to create the first Ronald McDonald House, a temporary residence where parents of sick children being treated far from home could go for rest and emotional support.

By 1979, ten more Ronald McDonald Houses had opened. Today, there are 235 Houses in 24 countries from Austria to Venezuela, supported by nearly 30,000 volunteers who annually donate more than three million hours of their time.

Three Core Programs

But the commitment of RMHC to the health and well-being of children does not end here. Ronald McDonald Houses are just one of three core programs supported by the McDonald’s Corporation and its vast network of franchisees, crew members, business partners and community volunteers on every level:

The Ronald McDonald Family Room™ Program, introduced in Kansas City in 1992, provides families of critically ill children with a haven just steps from their child’s bedside. Located within the hospital itself, Ronald McDonald Family Rooms offer the comforts of a kitchen, dining area, shower facilities, and in many cases, several bedrooms where parents can get some much-needed sleep. Today, there are 61 Ronald McDonald Family Rooms in seven countries, including Taiwan and Turkey.



Ronald McDonald Care Mobiles™, the newest member of the RMHC triumvirate, were launched in 2000 to bring high-quality medical, dental, and educational services to underserved children in both urban and rural areas. Currently, there are 18 Ronald McDonald Care Mobile programs serving kids throughout the U.S. and Buenos Aires. RMHC plans to raise this number to 30 by the end of 2005.

And there’s more—much more. Ronald McDonald House Charities also awards grants to other non-profit organizations around the globe that are committed to the health and well-being of children—over \$380 million to date for programs that tackle child abuse and teen suicide, offer relief to refugees, and provide scholarships to students from disadvantaged communities.

Where We’re Going From Here

RMHC President & CEO Ken Barun offers what may be the best summation of the organization’s goals: “Our work is about finding the children who need us most—wherever in the world that might be—and finding a way to help them. And that’s what we will continue to do...one child at a time.”

Over the coming months, we’ll be introducing you to a few of the people involved in RMHC programs, from McDonald’s Owner/Operators to some of the extraordinary kids they’ve helped. For more information on how you can become involved in Ronald McDonald House Charities, visit www.rmhc.org.